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SUBJECT: ICELANDIC PRESIDENT GRIMSSON PITCHES CANDIDACY FOR
SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT

¶1. (SBU) On February 22, Icelandic President Grimsson told Ambassador Khalilzad that he had been "personally engaged" since last year in Iceland's race against Austria and Turkey for a seat on the Security Council in 2009-2010. Grimsson said Iceland had been offering potential supporters cooperation on clean energy and education, but "unlike our competitors, not financial assistance." President Grimsson also said he had heard complaints from small-to-medium-sized states that non-permanent members of the Security Council do not brief them on Council activity, so Iceland has been promising these states improved dialogue if it wins a Council seat.

¶2. (SBU) Grimsson asked whether the U.S. could support Iceland's bid to which Khalilzad responded that the U.S. will give weight to Iceland's status as a NATO partner. Khalilzad agreed that we should aim for more openness and transparency in the Security Council. In response to a question from Khalilzad regarding how the vote count looks, Grimsson said that Iceland has been "seeing momentum from the middle of last year up to now." One of Grimsson's aides noted that Iceland's development cooperation with twenty-six countries in the Caribbean and South Pacific has been increasing as a result of Iceland's outreach. Grimsson also stated that Security Council membership would allow Iceland to bring its traditionally strong relationship with the US and UK to a new level of cooperation.

¶3. (SBU) Ambassador Khalilzad asked Grimsson if Iceland had a main agenda it wanted to bring to the Security Council. He responded that it did not have an agenda as such, but is interested in focusing on human rights, refugees, women's issues and climate change. Grimsson discussed his views on climate change at length. (Note: Grimsson gave a climate change briefing at the UN's Dag Hammarskjold Library on February 21. End note.)

KHALILZAD